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Contribution to US Military Capabilities in the Region

The proposed Saudi enhancement package would support our regional strategy by expanding defense cooperation and increasing our presence in the region. It would also bring tangible, near-term military benefits to the US.

If and when US forces did deploy to the Gulf region, the existence of an AWACS-compatible air defense net in Saudi Arabia would greatly facilitate that deployment and enhance the effectiveness of US forces.

We presently have inadequate facilities, maintenance equipment, and spare parts in the Gulf area to support the exercise or deployment of US forces. Deployment of US tactical air forces equipped with systems such as AWACS and F-15s, in particular, would require sophisticated support to be effective. If the AWACS/F-15 equipment package is approved, the Saudis would be far more able to provide material support for US forces if we were needed to assist them in their defense.

Extensive stocks of spares, supplies and support equipment are needed to make these systems work. Three years of spares for F-15s and AWACS, which would be compatible with US equipment, would be stockpiled in Saudi Arabia. The US has no other stockpiles in the Middle East except limited F-15 assets in Israel. The Saudis would also have the maintenance support equipment and facilities (unique to each system) which they could make available to support US forces in a major Southwest Asia contingency. Because current and projected US airlift and sealift cannot respond in a timely manner to support fully the level of effort required in major contingencies, Saudi development of these facilities is a critical element in our Persian Gulf strategy.

The sale would also ensure the presence of US maintenance and support personnel in Saudi Arabia throughout the life of the systems, as well as the presence of US training personnel for a more limited period.

With interoperable equipment, compatible facilities and trained US and Saudi personnel already in place, the opportunities for joint air operations are good; without these, the opportunities for joint operations are severely limited. The sale of the proposed equipment would promote military relationships that provide a basis for joint cooperative security programs.

September 9, 1981

Impact of Sale's Disapproval

Like other governments, the Saudi regime recognizes its right and its duty to provide for the security of its population and territory. If the United States fails to provide the Saudis with equipment which could enhance their defensive capabilities to meet real -- and serious -- threats to their security, it would seriously undermine our security strategy and posture in the Persian Gulf region.

- US Reliability. A failure to implement this sale would cast doubt on US reliability as a security partner, not just in Saudi Arabia but throughout the area. Strengthening perceptions of our reliability is essential if countries in the Gulf region and elsewhere are to believe that the benefits of embracing our strategy outweigh the political risks and costs. Failing to do this can only result in declining US influence among moderate Arab states and diminished prospects for an enduring peace in the area.

- Regional Strategy. The credibility of our regional security strategy would be undermined. In particular, we would, at least in the near-to-medium term, lose all hope of forging a strategic consensus in the region. By demonstrating an inability to act in support of friendly states, those states -- as well as our allies elsewhere -- will be less willing to cooperate with us.

- Regional Security Presence. Fewer opportunities would exist for enhancing our de facto presence in the region and for participating in local states' military operations. Joint exercises with regional states would become politically and logistically much more difficult to arrange and conduct. Possibilities for establishing a regional air defense network would be markedly reduced. Perhaps most seriously, in a future crisis requiring the deployment of US forces to the Gulf, the US would not be able to draw on many Saudi assets provided through this and other sales of US military equipment to help sustain our forces.

- Control and Influence. If the US is unable or unwilling to complete the sale, the Saudis can turn elsewhere for systems similar to the US-made F-15 and AWACS. The Saudis, in fact, have held discussions with the British regarding possible sale of their Nimrod -- an airborne early warning aircraft which will

be comparable to AWACS. The Saudis are also involved in the development of the French Mirage 2000/4000, which they could procure instead of, or in addition to, US F-15s.

The issue, therefore, is less <u>whether</u> the Saudis will acquire the capabilities which they seek to buy from us, than <u>which country</u> will provide them and exercise the influence which would result. It would not be in our interest or Israel's if another country or countries were to replace us as Saudi Arabia's major arms supplier.

September 9, 1981

Saudi Military Requirements

The Iran-Iraq war has demonstrated that oil fields are not off limits in regional conflicts. The Saudis were concerned enough about the danger of air attack to ask the US to deploy four of its AWACS to Saudi Arabia. The items we propose to sell will significantly improve the Saudis' own ability to defend their immensely important oil facilities in the northeast by enabling them to meet an air attack more effectively, a purpose also in the US interest.

An attack on Saudi Arabia could come from several regional sources: from a spillover of the Iran-Iraq war, whereby one of the protagonists attacked Saudi oil fields as a way of deterring Saudi support for the other side; or from South Yemen or Ethiopia, where a significant Soviet military presence underscores the region's instability and the dangers of Soviet penetration.

In the unlikely event of a direct Soviet attack, both we and the Saudis realize that the four components of the enhancement package would be of limited value in blunting a major Soviet offensive. However, the sale would ensure the existence of an extensive logistics base and support infrastructure in Saudi Arabia -- including spare parts, facilities and trained personnel -- that would greatly facilitate a US reinforcement.

Present Saudi air defenses are inadequate to defend against regional attacks on its oil fields. Neighboring countries' air bases are in close proximity to them (Iran's are within 145 nautical miles); thus an early warning is mandatory. But the Saudis currently must rely on ground surveillance radars. Because of Saudi Arabia's lack of high terrain, detection of very low altitude aircraft is limited to approximately a 30 nautical mile range, or about five minutes warning time. Consequently, severe damage could be inflicted on Saudi Arabia's eastern oil facilities before the Saudi Air Force, alerted by ground radar, could respond.

The AWACS (E-3A) aircraft would provide warning of an air attack much sooner than ground based radar. The AWACS radar is capable of detecting low-flying target aircraft up to 200 nautical miles away, greatly increasing warning time of an attack. In time of tension, five Saudi AWACS with refueling could provide round-the-clock surveillance of one front for up to seven days. The AWACS target acquisition capability, in conjunction with the Saudis' ground-based air defense network, would also be able to

direct Saudi F-5 interceptor aircraft against airborne targets more effectively than their internal air intercept radar.

Dhahran, the one Saudi air base close enough to the oil fields to provide air defense with current Saudi capabilities, would itself be vulnerable to attack. The location of the other two F-15 air bases in the western sector of the country would prohibit their unrefueled F-15s from defending the oil fields.

The equipment to extend the range of Saudi F-15s -- the conformal fuel tanks (CFTs) and the air refueling aircraft (KC-707) -- would enable F-15s to defend east coast petroleum facilities while operating from bases that are more distant from the oil fields and therefore less susceptible to attack.

The CFTs would allow the F-15s to remain on-station over the target area for about an hour and still return to their station, and reduce the number of sorties required to maintain combat air patrol in times of tension. The KC-707 refueling aircraft could extend the endurance of AWACS as well, reducing the sortie demands on a small fleet (5) of surveillance aircraft.

The AIM-9L Sidewinder air-to-air missile enhances Saudi air defenses with its capability of forward hemisphere (head-on) attack against hostile aircraft. This obviates the requirement for Saudi interceptors to lose vital time in maneuvering into a rear hemisphere attack position as required with the missiles currently in the Saudi inventory.

September 9, 1981

The Saudi Equipment Package and Israeli Security

This paper discusses the impact that the equipment package would have on Saudi and broader Arab capabilities against Israel. It concludes that:

o The equipment package would not measurably affect Israel's qualitative military edge over its Arab neighbors' collective capabilities.

o The equipment package would marginally improve already existing Saudi offensive capabilities; it would not provide a qualitatively new threat.

o The Saudi AWACS could not effectively coordinate the operations of other Arab air forces.

F-15 Enhancements and Tanker Aircraft. The major impact of conformal fuel tanks (CFTs), tanker aircraft, and AIM-9L air-to-air missiles would be to improve RSAF capabilities to defend Saudi airspace. These items will not significantly alter the tactical air balance between the Arab states and Israel. The Saudis fully recognize that Israel's air defense system (including pilots, aircraft, surface-to-air systems and crews) is extraordinarily capable, and that Saudi missions into Israeli airspace--either to engage Israeli aircraft or strike Israeli targets--would be prohibitively costly.

With or without CFTs or tanker aircraft, Saudi aircraft can reach Israeli targets. The range improvements offered by CFTs and tankers will increase Saudi F-15 basing and dispersal options, which would decrease their vulnerability to a pre-emptive attack.

AWACS. The addition of AWACS to the Saudi inventory would greatly improve Saudi Arabia's ability to defend its own airspace. It would not measurably improve the ability of Saudi Arabia or other Arab air forces to conduct missions within Israeli airspace.

AWACS would dramatically increase the warning time available to the Saudis, especially during a low altitude attack from across the Gulf. This would be especially important in defending the critical oil facilities located on or near the Saudi coastline. Five AWACS aircraft would provide the

Saudis with t[illegible]apability to maintain one continuous AWACS orbit (and that [illegible]or only about a week). This means that any AWACS deployments to other parts of Saudi Arabia would necessarily come at the expense of full coverage of the Eastern province.

Since AWACS cannot detect ground targets, it would not contribute directly to Saudi ground attack capabilities. In air-to-air situations, the F-15's excellent air intercept radar gives it a target acquisition capability that would be only marginally enhanced by AWACS. AWACS could, however, significantly enhance the effectiveness of Saudi F-5s by directing them to airborne targets they would not otherwise encounter.

The limited capabilities of Saudi F-5s against Israeli-piloted F-15s, F-16s, Kfirs, and F-4s, however, would significantly mitigate the impact of AWACS in this role against Israel. Moreover, the Saudi AWACS aircraft would itself be vulnerable to attack. With or without AWACS, Israel's highly effective air defense systems, coupled with Saudi vulnerability to retaliation from Israel, provides a strong deterrent to any potential Saudi attack.

If the Saudis chose to expose their AWACS by operating it close to Israel, it could collect real-time data on the air battle. This would include information on Israeli air attacks, air patrol areas, tanker orbit points, and other data which, in theory, could increase the effectiveness of Arab air forces.

However, this information would be highly "perishable," most of it being valuable only for a few minutes following its collection. Therefore, without a sophisticated, computerized communications network in other Arab countries--which only the US could provide--little of this data could be effectively employed in a tactical situation in a collective Arab attack on Israel. The only other method of transmitting this data to other Arab countries quickly would be on open radios, which are susceptible to jamming.

The AWACS contains no signal intelligence or photoreconnaissance capabilities so that it cannot gather "intelligence."

Alternative Suppliers. The Saudis could turn to other Western sources for roughly comparable systems if the proposed sale of the equipment package is not consummated. The French Mirage 2000 and Matra improved R.550 missile might appeal to the Saudis as a substitute for the F-15/AIM-9L package. Likewise, the British Mk.3 Nimrod could substitute for AWACS. If

US equipment is purchased, the Saudis will look to US government and contractor personnel for training, support, and maintenance for the life of these systems. It would not be in our interest nor in the interest of Israel if the US were replaced as Saudi Arabia's primary arms supplier and security partner.

September 9, 1981

Our Persian Gulf Strategy and the Saudi Equipment Package

Our security strategy for the Persian Gulf region is built on three general principles:

o Improving our military position in and near the region will help deter direct Soviet aggression and counter Soviet coercion and intimidation.

o Strengthening the capabilities of our regional friends will make them better able--and more willing--to deal with local threats and to cooperate with us in a crisis.

o Ameliorating local sources of conflict and the deeper antagonisms in the region (including Arab-Israeli antagonisms) will increase internal and regional stability and deny the Soviets opportunities for threatening our interests and friends.

The proposed sale of the equipment package to Saudi Arabia promotes these principles. It clearly enhances Saudi early warning and air defense against local threats to Saudi oil facilities which are critical to the US and its Western allies. In doing so, it responds to the legitimate security requirements of the country whose cooperation is central to the success of our security strategy. It also serves our broader strategic interests of enhancing Gulf security by laying the groundwork for greater US-Saudi defense cooperation and for a wider Gulf air defense network. Finally, by illustrating our value as a reliable security partner, it helps to rebuild confidence in a US role as a credible arbiter of regional tensions, and to increase willingness to work with us to achieve a durable Mideast peace.

We recognize that there are potential risks involved in making the sale. Although we believe this equipment package will not measurably affect Israel's superiority, we recognize that it will complicate Israeli security planning. We intend to take steps to minimize any adverse impact on Israel and we remain committed to preserving Israel's qualitative military advantage.

At the same time, we consider a stable and secure Saudi Arabia to be in our and in Israel's interest. We believe that, in the long run, Israel will be made more rather than less secure by the sale, in light of its contribution to regional stability, its limited offensive utility, and its assurance of continued US cooperation and influence in Saudi

Arabia. By the same token, we feel that our strategic cooperation with Israel is essential for enhancing our military position in the area and that this, too, serves the fundamental interests of all our friends in the region.

If the proposed sale of the equipment package is not consummated, our interests and our position in the region would be severely damaged. It would harm our security relationship with Saudi Arabia and would deal a severe setback to our security strategy for the Gulf. It would make local countries doubt our word and wonder whether the Administration could deliver on a commitment. It would also heighten doubts about the value of a security partnership with the US and nurture the view that one has little to gain by being a US friend.

September 9, 1981

The Stability of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has proven to be one of the most stable Arab states of this century. For over fifty years, the Saudi Royal family has demonstrated skill and adaptability in coping with the tensions of rapid social and economic change at home and political turmoil and armed conflict in neighboring countries. Nevertheless, some Western observers find it difficult to understand fully the dynamics of Saudi society and tend to question whether the traditional Saudi regime can long survive the stresses of modernization. Revolutions elsewhere in the Middle East have periodically intensified this concern, which also reflects recognition of the greatly increased importance of Saudi Arabia to the U.S. and the West over the last decade.

Elements of Strength

- The Saudi regime enjoys a strong tradition of legitimacy among the tribal elements of Arabia, which have looked to it for leadership for over two centuries. This tribal basis of power has been reinforced by the Ruling Family's close association with the Wahhabi Islamic reformist movement which remains the driving force of religious life in the country. The Ruling Family has carefully preserved its tribal and religious bases, and remains in close consultation with the leadership of these elements.

- While the Saudi regime is frequently stereotyped in the West as deeply conservative, it has, in the experience of its own people, been the modernizing force which has brought the benefits of technology, health and education to a once extremely backward and impoverished society. Because of the enormous flow of oil wealth, the regime has been able to distribute social and economic benefits on a broad scale without placing the burden of taxation on its own people.

- The regime's prestige at home has been enhanced by Saudi Arabia's role in the Islamic world as the keeper of the holy places of Mecca and Medina, and, during the past decade, its enhanced status in the Arab world. The Saudis have moved from a defensive position against revolutionary Arab movements to an initiative role in relieving Arab tensions and catalyzing Arab consensus. The perception both at home and in the wider Arab world of the regime's dedication to Arab causes remains the most critical factor in the prospects for political stability in Saudi Arabia, and the leadership has carefully pursued policies which reflect recognition of this fact.

- The leadership of the Ruling Family has consistently displayed a talent for carefully building family consensus and maintaining essential family unity, which has been a critical factor in the regime's survival. The large size of the Saudi family allows it to permeate every significant aspect of the

society, and to remain in close contact with all key elements.

The revolution in Iran intensified Western concern over the stability of other Middle East governments. Saudi Arabia's role in the region is very different from that of Iran under the Shah. The Shah had ambitions of playing the role of regional policeman. By contrast, the Saudis have neither the military potential nor inclination to fill such a role, and the U.S. has no intention of encouraging them to do so. Saudi Arabia does, however, play a respected role as a catalyst of Islamic opinion.

Elements of Potential Instability

- The regime continues to be faced with the delicate task of reconciling popular demands for progress with the need to preserve the social and religious foundation of a deeply conservative society. Important elements of Saudi society believe that social, economic and political progress is too rapid and have historically brought pressure on the regime to restrain social change. Yet it is doubtful that any major segment of Saudi society today would choose to foresake the technological and educational advantages now beginning to be made available on a massive scale. A social and religious consensus continues to exist in Saudi Arabia both on acquiring technology and in shading its effects to fit the religious foundations of the Saudi state.

- Saudi political institutions have evolved through the traditional structures of family, clan and tribe, with direct recourse to the King's majlis if these avenues prove insufficient to satisfy individual needs or grievances. While these institutions continue to function in a reasonably effective manner -- enhanced by their inherent flexibility -- and with a large degree of popular consent, they are becoming increasingly strained as the population grows and the economy becomes more complex. Although there is today no intense widespread pressure for drastic political change, in time the new generation of highly educated Saudis will in all probability seek better access to the decision-making process. The government has already begun to address this problem and is studying proposals for a consultative assembly and a new system of local government.

- In the long term, the heavy presence of foreigners in the Saudi work force raises questions of social stability. The regime is acutely aware of these problems and has long demonstrated readiness to deal with expatriate grievances. Large segments of the foreign community are separated from the Saudi society by religion, culture and language and show little tendency to develop roots in Saudi Arabia; their motives for being there are monetary and their attitudes are apolitical. The

Arab foreign groups -- Palestinians, Egyptians, and Yemenis -- play an important role in the Saudi economy, but they have not exercised a significant role in the political life of the Kingdom.

The Bottom Line

There is no significant evidence of the types of dissension or organized opposition which have normally preceded revolutionary situations or serious internal instability in other Middle Eastern countries. To date, the Saudi regime seems to have succeeded in preventing significant alienation on the part of either the modern or traditional elements of the society. The regime remains extremely sensitive, however, to the well-demonstrated political volatility of Arab societies caught up in nationalist concepts and has been extremely careful to conduct its foreign policy in a way that is consistent with the Arab nationalist aspirations of its own people.

Finally, the U.S. - Saudi relationship has an important bearing on Saudi security in several respects. First, the Saudis have resisted and will continue to resist aspects of their relationship with the United States which if taken too far would create internal problems with their own people. At the same time, however, the concept of U.S. support for Saudi Arabia and the perception that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia enjoy a special relationship are an important buttress to the stability of the Kingdom. Any indication of a withdrawal or weakening of that support would embarrass and weaken the regime both internally and within the Arab world.

September 4, 1981

SAUDI ARABIA AS A FORCE FOR MODERATION IN THE ARAB WORLD

Saudi Arabia has traditionally adopted conservative positions on major issues affecting the Arab world. As its financial resources increased during the 1970s, it began to play a more activist role, characterized by gradually increasing diplomatic activity on Arab issues and careful give/withhold tactics in disbursing financial assistance. These efforts have by and large sought to limit Soviet and Communist influence in the Arab world, to foster Arab unity and consensus, and to counter radical pressures on moderate Arab regimes. In most cases these Saudi activities have been seen as constructive by the West. It is inevitable that Saudi activity and influence on Arab issues in the 1980s will increase. A favorable decision on the Saudi equipment package will encourage the Saudi leadership to continue to exercise this influence in constructive directions.

Saudi Arabia has supported a peaceful resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict and has accepted UN Resolutions 242 and 338. It supported the U.S. peace effort up to the Camp David meeting but has not accepted the Camp David approach. Following the Israeli-Egyptian treaty, Saudi Arabia joined in the Baghdad Summit resolutions condemning Egypt and rejecting Camp David as inadequate to achieve a comprehensive political solution.

In August 1981, Saudi Arabia published an 8-point peace plan which reaffirmed its desire for a peaceful settlement based on Israeli withdrawal from all the territories it occupied in 1967, creation of a Palestinian state with "Arab Jerusalem" as its capital, and recognition that all states in the region should be able to live in peace. It remains to be seen whether this plan will lead to a more active Saudi role in the peace process.

Although Saudi Arabia formally broke relations with Egypt after the Baghdad Summit in 1979, the two governments maintain contact through several channels. Remittances from Egyptian workers in Saudi Arabia contribute to Egyptian financial health as do the expenditures of Saudi visitors. Saudi Arabia has also supported the relatively moderate elements within the PLO against leftist and more violence-prone guerrilla organizations. This support has consisted of financial contributions and occasional shipments of small arms and ammunition. Saudi support has enabled moderate Palestinian leaders to resist Syrian and Libyan pressures and was an important element in the PLO acceptance of the recent cease-fire in Southern Lebanon.

In other initiatives which have promoted security and stability in the Middle East the Saudis have:

-- helped mediate both phases of the recent crisis in Lebanon in order to resolve the confrontation at Zahle and to bring about a cease-fire in Southern Lebanon;

-- along with Kuwait, stimulated creation of the Gulf Security Council;

-- led the Arab world in condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; Saudi Arabia continues to assure that this subject receives priority treatment in Arab and Islamic councils;

-- encouraged Egypt and Somalia to cut their ties with the Soviet Union;

-- supported anti-communist forces in the Yemen Arab Republic;

-- facilitated reconciliation between Morocco and Algeria on the Saharan issues;

-- urged Iraq to improve relations with the United States; and

-- provided financial assistance to moderate Arab and Islamic states, including Morocco, Turkey, Pakistan, Sudan, Oman, Jordan and Bahrain.

September 4, 1981

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AWACS and Saudi Ground Environment

Saudi Arabia plans to upgrade the existing ground environment portion of its air defense system, which was acquired in the late 1960s. The ground environment improvements package, encompassing modernization of the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) Command, Control and Communications (C^3) system will be included in the full RSAF enhancement package sent to Congress.

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These ground environment enhancements are necessary, in combination with the 5 E-3A AWACS aircraft, to provide the RSAF with an effective, fully integrated air defense surveillance and C^3 system.

The planned improvements in the Saudi ground environment system are based on a two-year C^3 master plan study conducted by the US Air Force for the RSAF.

The planned upgrade includes new hardened command and control (C^2) facilities; new data processing and display equipment for those facilities; and improvements to the ground radar surveillance network through replacement of existing radars, and addition of new sites to extend coverage.

The AWACS would significantly augment ground environment surveillance capability and provide C^2 flexibility through its interface with the ground environment by means of Ground Entry Stations (GES). These Ground Entry Stations, located at C^2 facilities and other selected locations for optimum radio coverage, provide communications and processing equipment for data exchange compatibility between AWACS and ground environment data processing systems.

The ground environment improvements will take about six years to complete. The total cost of this program to the Saudis is estimated to be about $2 billion. The Saudis plan for the radars to be jointly acquired and operated by the RSAF (10 systems) and the Presidency for Civil Aviation (12 systems).

Issue Paper: Contributions of Sale to a Gulf Air Defense System

The sale of AWACS, Tankers, Conformal Fuel Tanks, and AIM-9L missiles will enhance the capability of Saudi Arabia to provide a credible defense of the Kingdom. In addition, it sets the stage for the development, with US backing, of a regional air defense system for the entire Gulf region.

Saudi Arabia has taken the lead in the formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) with Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, UAE, and Kuwait. A major objective of the GCC is to enhance the defense of the Gulf.

The AWACS and its ground environment system affords the capability to link the air defense networks of these states into a unified system. Since the feasibility and effectiveness for such a regional network would depend on US equipment and technology, the US would be assured of a key role in the development of any regional air defense system and of continuing participation in its operations.

- o AWACS aircraft could transmit data through US provided ground receiving equipment to provide early warning information to Saudi command centers and other elements of the air defense network.

- o Data from AWACS could also contribute to the control of air defense interceptors from friendly Gulf nations.

- o As in the case of Saudi Arabia, the develoment of such a system would require US participation and technical leadership.

- o AWACS would be the leading element of the system which could grow to include the ground radars from all states. The establishment of a system of this type would facilitate joint training exercises and closer overall cooperation in defense. In time of crisis, the system could provide an invaluable basis for joint US-Gulf state air defense against an aggressor.

The Saudis have indicated their desire to work toward an integrated regional defense system. The AWACS will likely increase their willingness to financially support upgraded air defense for Bahrain (I-Hawk and ground radars), Qatar, Oman, and the other Gulf states. The AWACS sale will also encourage the use of US equipment in the other Gulf nations.

The most effective use of the Saudi AWACS will be its deep look surveillance capability over the Persian Gulf for early warning, and its ability to retreat within the Kingdom's boundaries and assist in directing Saudi fighters against attacking aircraft attempting to penetrate Saudi airspace. It is in this air defense role that we expect the Saudis to employ the AWACS. The Iran/Iraq conflict proved that the potential threat to Saudi oil facilities is real and urgent. Without AWACS, the Saudi's air defenses are virtually blind, unable to detect attacking aircraft, particularly low-flying ones, and unable to provide warning in sufficient time to respond effectively. With AWACS, the Saudis will have the capability to effectively use both the F-15 and F-5 aircraft to intercept hostile aircraft prior to reaching their designated targets and maximize the early warning to surface-to-air missile (SAM) defenses near the target areas.